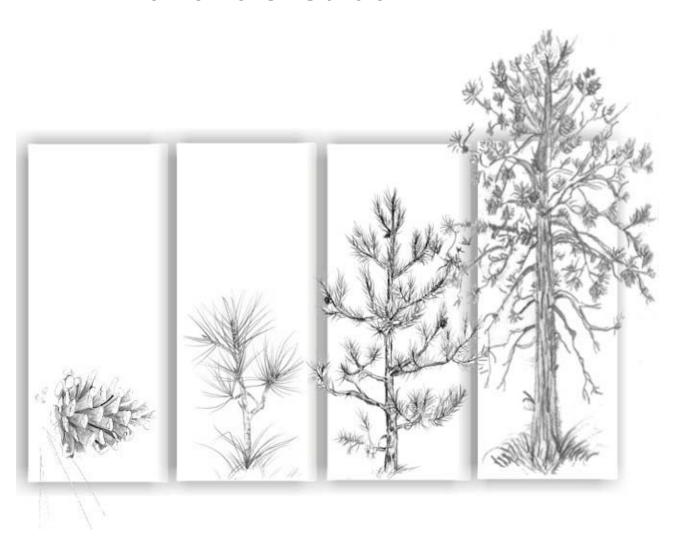


Forest Service Eastern Region

April 2003

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Forest Plan Revision Reviewers' Guide



The Route to a Revised Forest Plan

Need for change analysis

Scoping

Forest Service solicites input from public, agencies, and employees regarding the issues to be addressed by proposed Forest Plan revision.

Notice of Intent (NOI)

Forest Service officially announces intent to revise Forest Plans and proposal to address issues identified during scoping. Comments on NOI identify additional issues appropriate to be addressed by revision.

Develop Alternatives

Minnesota National Forest Planning Team collaborates with public to develop alternatives for Draft EIS that address key issues.

Analyze Alternatives

Minnesota National Forest Planning Team evaluates environmental impacts of alternatives based on key issues identified during scoping.

Regional Forester Chooses Preferred Alternative Draft EIS and Two Proposed Forest Plans are Released

Description and analysis of alternatives released to public for review.

Comment Period

90 days are provided for interested parties to review and provide written substantive comment regarding Draft EIS and Proposed Forest Plans

Response to Comments

Minnesota National Forest Planning Team determines additional information or analysis needed to respond to the comments received.

Revise Draft EIS and Proposed Forest Plans

Minnesota National Forest Planning Team incorporates new information and adjustments to alternatives into the Final EIS and Final Revised Forest Plans.

Release Final EIS

Forests issue Final EIS with changes and response to substantive comments included.

Issue Two Records of Decision (ROD)

Regional Forester selects alternative to implement for each Forest and signs two separate documents that include the rational for the selected alternative for each Forest.

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We are

Here

Final Revised Forest Plans issued for each Forest **Welcome** and thank you for participating in revising the Forest Plans for the Chippewa and Superior National Forests.

It is not necessary for you to read every page of the Draft EIS and Proposed Plans to understand and comment on their contents. It is important to understand the purpose behind Forest Plan Revision, the relationship between different sections in the documents and how the Forest Service responds to comments.

This review guide is meant to provide an overview of Forest Plan revision, help you navigate the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Proposed Forest Plans and provide guidance on commenting. This guide is not a substitute for the information in the Draft EIS or Proposed Forest Plans.

What you'll need:

- ☐ This review guide (optional)
- □ The Draft EIS for Revision of the Chippewa and Superior National Forests or Executive Summary
- ☐ The proposed Forest Plan for the Chippewa or Superior National Forest
- Map package
- □ Blank paper to take notes on and/or comment form (option-enclosed)
- □ Internet access (optional)
- □ Approximately 1 day (+8 hours)

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Speak the language...

If you are entering unfamiliar territory as you prepare to review the Draft EIS and Proposed Plan, you are not alone. There are many key terms that are peculiar to National Forest Planning and which have specific connotations. Here are a few more important terms for revision. See additional definitions of terms in the glossary located at the back of the Draft EIS.

Quick Guide to Key Forest Service Planning Terms

Proposed Action = The project (revising the Forest Plan), set of activities, or decision that a federal agency intends to implement, as defined in National Environmental Policy Act regulations.

Purpose and Need = This is a general statement of what, where, how, when and why the agency is proposing an action. It sets the scope and range for issues and alternatives carried forward for analysis.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) = A statement of environmental effects required for major federal actions under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). After release of the Draft EIS and Proposed Forest Plans, an interdisciplinary team will review public comments and, as needed, will modify the Proposed Forest Plan and the supporting analysis described in the Draft EIS. The Final EIS will then be issued along with a Record of Decision.

Issue = A subject or question of wide-spread public or internal discussion or interest regarding management of National Forest System.

Indicators = In the analysis of alternatives, indicators are used to measure the effects under resource issues expected to result from implementation of alternatives.

Alternative = An option for responding to the purpose and need.

Management Area = The Forest is generally divided into areas that carry common management objectives and specific management direction.

Collaborative Planning = The Forest Service works with the public, state and local agencies, tribal governments, regulatory agencies, other federal agencies and others to assure the most efficient and effective management possible.

Ecosystem Management = An ecological approach to natural resource management to assure productive, healthy ecosystem by blending social, economic, physical, and biological needs and values.

Range of Alternatives = Options for addressing the proposed action. Issues raised by the public, management concerns, and resource opportunities determine the appropriate range of alternatives.

Preferred Alternative = Alternative initially preferred by the Regional Forester, from the range of alternatives and effects identified in the Draft EIS. It is the alternative that he believes best resolves the management problems for each National Forest within the context of the mission and priorities of the Forest Service. This selection will be based on the completed analysis of alternatives that will be disclosed in the Draft EIS with a description of all alternatives and associated environmental effects.

Proposed Forest Plan = The Proposed Forest Plan for each Forest will be based on the Preferred Alternative identified and described in the Draft EIS. The Proposed Forest Plan results from extensive analysis and considerations addressed in the draft EIS.

Selected Alternative = The alternative that is ultimately selected by the Regional Forester to become the Final Revised Forest Plan, which will guide future Forest Management based on public comments and further analysis after the Draft EIS. The selected alternative is described in the Record of Decision (ROD) along with the rational for selection.

Final Revised Forest Plan = Based on the selected alternative, a final revised Forest Plan will then be issued for each Forest.

Adjusting our course to the future

Forest management is a long journey. Forest Plans define the goals and objectives for management along a 10 to 15-year piece of that journey. As on any long journey, we periodically check our current location, review the destination, and evaluate and consult with others to determine the best course to take to where we want to go. This is the point of the process to revise Forest Plans.

The current Forest Plans on the Chippewa and Superior National Forests, which were implemented in 1986, were the first effort to formalize direction for management decisions pertaining specifically to these two National Forests.



Why Revise Forest Plans?

National Forest Management Plans are generally revised on a 10-year cycle, or at least every 15 years. (National Forest Management Act, 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 219.10[g])

Forest Plans are revised to address:

- Monitoring and evaluation results from implementing the current plans
- ♣Forest plan and project-level appeal issues and decisions
- Lawsuit issues and decisions
- New scientific information
- Schanged conditions of the land
- Changing public demands and public input

Double Re-Vision

The Forest Supervisors of the Chippewa and Superior National Forests have determined that, while current Forest conditions are good, major changes have occurred since the current Forest Plans were published. It is time to refine our vision for future management.

The two national forests will complete **one joint environmental analysis** and issue **two separate decisions and two separate revised plans.** This approach reflects our similar analysis needs but differing local needs and constraints on each national forest.

The Draft EIS meets requirement of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for analyzing potential environmental effects for actions proposed on national forests. Some analysis in the Draft EIS is combined but many of the environmental effects are shown for each Forest.

The Proposed Forest Plans are based on the alternative preferred by the Regional Forester. Proposed Forest Plans are developed at this point to provide insight into what the final revised forest plans might look like.

A New Look

The revised Forest Plans will look different and function differently from the current plans that were implemented in 1986. The current plan includes detailed direction. Often this detailed direction duplicates another source and can actually limit the options that may be considered for a project. The revised plans will be more strategic in nature and will not repeat direction included in Forest Service handbooks or manuals, Memorandums of Understanding, and regional or national directives

IMPORTANT NOTE: This Forest Plan revision will not change management direction in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Comments on this section of the Superior National Forest Plan will not be considered at this time.

About Forest Plans

also known as Land and Resource Management Plans

The function of the Forest Plan is to assure coordination of multiple-uses including outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, wildlife and fish, wilderness, sustained yield of products and services. Multiple use allows for a range of activities to occur across the Forest. A forest plan does not make site-specific decisions but it does provide a hierarchy of direction.

A Forest Plan makes six key decisions for managing a national forest on a landscape-scale in the long term. (36 CFR 219, 1982 regulations):

1. What Desired conditions, multiple use goals, and objectives are identified for the

entire Forest.

2. When Measurable steps are defined with a timeframe towards accomplishing goals

and objectives. (Generally 10-15 year time period of the Forest Plan)

3. How Standards and guidelines provide more detailed direction.

4. Where The entire Forest is allocated among Management Areas with different

management emphasis. Lands are determined to be suited or not suited for timber

management

5. Feedback loop Monitoring and evaluating requirements are addressed.

6. Additional Recommendations may be made to Congress, such as wilderness

action needed designations.

HEIRARCHY OF FOREST PLAN DIRECTION

Forest-wide Goals and Desired Conditions

These are broad statements describing how the Forests should look and function with successful implementation of the Forest Plan. All of the other levels of management direction are linked to the forest-wide desired condition. EXAMPLE: Vegetation conditions contribute to ecosystem sustainability and address the needs and interests of present and future generations.

Forest-wide Objectives

Statements of measurable and planned biological, physical, social, and economic outcomes that move the Forest towards achieving desired conditions. EXAMPLE: Within 10 years, vegetation will begin to move toward the long-term desired composition, age, spatial distribution and within –stand diversity.

Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines

Standards are specific <u>required</u> actions that must be incorporated into future decisions to help achieve the desired conditions. Guidelines are specific <u>suggested</u> actions to help achieve desired conditions. EXAMPLE-Standard: Maintain a minimum of 6,000 acres of mature and older red & white pine forest types in patches greater than 300 acres.

Desired Conditions for Landscape Ecosystems

Desired conditions have been described for each landscape ecosystem in terms of distribution of age classes, species diversity, and stand diversity. EXAMPLE: Increase the percentage of white pine in the Jack Pine/Black Spruce Landscape ecosystem.

Management Area Direction

Goals, objectives, standards and guidelines identified for specific areas (management areas) that will help achieve Forest-wide desired conditions. EXAMPLE: For the Longer Rotation Management Area, timber production is a key emphasis with generally longer rotations and more uneven-aged and partial harvests.

Project Decisions

Natural resource managers develop site-specific decisions that contribute to achieving the Forest-wide desired condition. EXAMPLE: A timber sale project would be designed to meet all of the above direction while meeting all other applicable regulatory requirements and Forest Service directives.



The analysis in the Draft EIS and the direction in the Proposed Plans are driven by the Purpose and Need and defined by issues and regulatory requirements identified at the early stages of revision. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires an analysis of potential environmental impacts for Federal activities that pose a significant environmental effect. In the Proposed Forest Plans, each stated "desired condition" and goal addresses the Purpose and Need as it relates to one or more resource issues. Each objective, standard, and guideline provide direction on the "how" and "when" to accomplish the desired condition.

PURPOSE & NEED-

The starting place
See Chapter 1 of Draft EIS
Issues relating to the Purpose &
Need include requirements and
concerns to be addressed by
Forest Plan Revision identified by
interested individuals, other
government agencies, and

ALTERNATIVES -

based on issues See Chapter 2 of Draft EIS Range of reasonable, different ways to address the issues by altering the frequency, approach, or amounts,

ANALYSIS -

based on issues
See Chapter 3 of Draft EIS
Potential environmental effects of
each alternative described in
relation to each issue identified
above.

PROPOSED PLAN -

based on preferred alternative A Proposed Plan is developed for each Forest based on the alternative preferred by the Regional Forester. Here are some important points to consider as you review the documents.

Questions to ask:

What is the stated Purpose & Need?
Are your issues accurately represented?
Are all key issues included?

(Remember, to be considered appropriate, issues must fit within the stated purpose and need for revising the Forest Plans.)

Questions to ask:

Mare there other alternatives that better meet the Purpose & Need?

How could alternatives be adjusted to better address the range of issues?

Is there at least one alternative or parts of alternatives that addresses your concerns?

Questions to ask:

MHow well does the environmental effects analysis consider all true effects anticipated and does it utilize the best information available?

Questions to ask:

Are the management areas defined and allocated appropriately for the theme of the preferred alternative?

Do the standards and guidelines address the stated goals and objectives?

If implemented, are the trade-offs reasonable while meeting the most needs and concerns?



Deciding where to go first

You do not need to read every word or even every section to answer the questions that are most important to you, especially once you understand the connections between sections of the documents.

The following pages map out (outline) the contents in the Draft EIS and the Proposed Forest Plans. Different approaches can be used to review the documents.

Answer these questions to choose a route:

Q. Do you want an overview of the Draft EIS and Proposed Forest Plans?

See...The Executive Summary then read the Proposed Forest Plan(s) and view maps of alternatives.

Q.What topic(s) are you most interested in (water, wildlife, recreation, etc)?

See...Chapter 1 of Draft EIS for a discussion on the issue then **track individual resource issues** through the analysis of effects in Chapter 3 and relevant appendices. Continue on to Proposed Forest Plans to see how management direction is provided for these resources.

Q. Are you interested in potential effects for specific area(s) of the Forest?

See...Chapters 2 and 3 of Draft EIS and the map package

Q. Are you interested in proposed management for specific area(s) of the Forest?

See...Chapter 3 of the Proposed Plans and map package.

Q. Are you interested in specific impact analyses?

See...Chapter 3 of the Draft EIS and relevant appendices.

Q. Are you looking for a description of the alternatives that were considered?

See...Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS.

Q. Do you want to know what kind of management direction is proposed across the Forests?

See...Chapter 2 of the Proposed Forest Plans.

Appendices are presented as background or reference information related to specifics in the main part of the documents.

You will usually only go to an appendix after finding a reference in one of the chapters of the document.

Road Map for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

The Draft EIS represents Interdisciplinary (from many resource specialists) input and analysis, public review and comment, a defined decision process, and subsequent disclosure of the analysis and decision.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Volume I)	What's in there?
	Describes Proposed Action (revise Forest Plans)
	Discusses reasons for revision including legal requirements, changed conditions and need for change in management.
Chapter 1: Purpose of	Explains any other analyses that influence the proposed action. (Roadless, New Planning Regulations, Minnesota Forest Resource Act, etc.)
and Need for Action	Explains decisions to be made and identifies the decision maker.
Answers the "Who, What, Where, When, Why" questions about the proposed action	Summarizes the scoping (input from interested parties) and significant issues that will be addressed or deleted from further analysis These issues frame the development and analysis of alternatives.
(Forest Plan Revision).	Previews remaining chapters of Draft EIS.
	Describes process used to develop the alternatives.
Chapter 2: Alternatives Including the Preferred	Explains Landscape Ecosystem Approach and Range of Natural Variability.
Alternative	Explains range of alternatives and any alternatives considered but dropped from further analysis.
	Describes alternatives (potential actions including "no action" alternative.
	Summarizes environmental consequences of implementing each alternative, including projected outcomes and related mitigations. Compares projected outcomes of alternatives.
	Identifies Preferred Alternative.
	Describes physical, biological, social and economic setting of each Forest.
Chapter 3: Affected Environment and Environmental Effects	Describes area of analysis for each issue and expected outcomes for each alternative.
Environmental Enects	Describes relationship of short-term uses and long-term outcomes.
	Discloses any irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources and identifies unavoidable adverse effects. Includes Environmental Justice evaluation.
	(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

Road Map for the D	Praft EIS (continued)					
Chapter 4: Preparers	Lists people involved in preparation of the Draft EIS and describes their roles.					
Chapter 5: Agencies consulted and list of recipients	List of agencies, organizations, and individuals that provided input and parties that received a copy of Draft EIS					
Glossary	Handy list of terms used in the Draft EIS.					
Reference	Other sources of information referenced in the Draft EIS					
Appendix A: Public Involvement	Describes public involvement and collaborative efforts with other agencies and governments.					
Appendix B: Analysis Process	Describes how indicators were used for multiple resource analysis. Also discusses use of computer models.					
Appendix C: Inventory and Evaluation of Roadless Areas	Discusses process and results of an inventory of Roadless Areas on both Forests.					
Appendix D: Management Indicator Habitats	Describes important habitats and associated wildlife, fish and plant species on each Forest.					
Appendix E: Wild and Scenic Rivers Process	Discusses Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and considerations in Forest Plan Revision.					
Appendix F: Transportation	Describes objectives for road maintenance on both Forests.					
Transportation	Discusses management direction for road management including road decommissioning.					
	Describes current conditions.					
	Identifies new road needs, and road decommissioning, by alternative.					
Appendix G: Range of Natural Variability and Landscape Ecosystems	Describes Range of Natural Variability and Landscape Ecosystems on the two Forests and identifies short and long term objectives for vegetation conditions.					
Appendix H: Cumulative Effects Summary	Presents the overall setting for the cumulative effects analysis contained in Chapter 3. This setting is based on the analysis and conclusions of the Minnesota Generic Environmental Impact Statement for Timber Harvest and the Minnesota Forest Resource Council Landscape effort.					
Appendix I: Relevant Laws and Regulations	Lists laws and regulations that apply to Forest Planning.					

Road Map for the Proposed Forest Plans

The document often referred to as "The Forest Plan" is actually a written strategy that is based on the alternative preferred by the Regional Forester.

Proposed Forest Plan Document	What's in there?
Chapter 1 – Introduction	Discusses the general purpose of the Forest Plan, the relationship of the Plan to other documents, and the Plan organization. Includes an integrated description of the Forest.
Chapter 2 – Forest-wide Management Direction	Presents management direction for the Forest as a whole. Provides Forest-wide goals, desired conditions, objectives, standards, and guidelines. Presents the desired condition of Landscape Ecosystems for forest type, age-class distribution, and within stand diversity.
Chapter 3 – Management Area Direction	Presents specific management direction for Management Areas. Provides desired conditions, objectives, standards, and guidelines
Chapter 4 – Monitoring and Evaluation	Includes direction for implementing the Forest Plan Presents a plan for monitoring and evaluating the effects of management practices Describes how the Plan would be amended or revised in the future .
(COI	NTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

Road Map for the Proposed Forest Plans (continued)					
Appendix A: Analysis of the Management Situation - Summary	Describes the Need for Change in management direction for selected resources, the current condition of those resources, and how the Plan addresses the need to improve those conditions.				
Appendix B: Minnesota National Forest ROS Mapping Criteria	Describes the modified classification used by the Chippewa and Superior National Forests to reflect northern Minnesota forest's unique landscapes in providing recreation opportunities.				
Appendix C: Management Indicator Habitats	Describes Management Indicator Habitats on the Forest and how they are used in the analysis and management direction.				
Appendix D: Proposed and Probable Practices, Goods Produced, and other Information	Displays an estimate of the goods and services provided, the proposed (decade 1) and probable (decade 2) management practices expected, and other information including land classification.				
NOTE: BWCAW Management direction is only provided as reference. Management direction will not be changed as part of revision. Forest Service will not respond to comments on this section					

Tips on effective commenting

Perhaps you have already been involved in identifying issues and developing alternatives for Forest Plan revision. Now is your chance to have your say again and let the Forest Service know if we "hit the mark" on the issues and alternatives as defined in the Draft EIS and the management direction presented in the Proposed Forest Plans. There are a few important points you need to know about how the Forest Service responds to comments and how we can both get the most out of your review of these documents.



After all, if you are going to take time to comment, you want it to count – right?

How important is my comment? It is your opportunity to affect alternatives and analysis that form the basis for a final decision.

How are comments used?

All comments on the Draft EIS and Proposed Plan will be considered. As a result:

- Alternatives may be modified
- New alternatives may be identified and analyzed
- Analysis may be expanded, modified or adjusted.
- Factual corrections

Will I get a response to my comment?

Substantive comments and Forest Service responses will be documented in the Final EIS.

NOTE: The management direction for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness will not be changed by this Forest Plan revision. The current management guidelines are included in the Superior National Forest Proposed Forest Plan only as a reference. The Forest Service will not respond to comments on that section.

- A **substantive comment** provides factual information, professional opinion, or informed judgment that is germane to the action being proposed.
- Substantive comments are specific, comparative, or solution-oriented.
- This is not a voting process. Comments are considered on basis of content not quantity.
- While all comments on the DEIS and Proposed Plans will be considered we can only provide detailed responses to substantive comments.
- Substantive comments and Forest Service responses will be documented in the FEIS.
- Substantive comments are considered by decision-maker and may be cited in the ROD

The Forest Service can not respond in the Final EIS to these kinds of comments:

"The Proposed Plan looks good." (Example of non-specific comment)

"I think the Regional Forester should select Alternative X to implement." (Example of opinion statement without supporting reasons)

This is the kind of comment we can respond to:

"The management direction for recreation in the General Forest Management Area should allow for additional RMV access." (Example of substantive comment.)

Refer to page 5 of this guide for some questions to consider while reviewing the documents.

See the Comment Form on page 13



On Your Way...

With some basic direction and "supplies", you are ready for smooth traveling. Remember these are **draft** documents and your input will help shape the final analysis and decision.

- Don't forget your Maps to the Draft EIS and Proposed Plans.
- After you complete your review, send your comments into the address on the comment form.
- If you have questions, difficulties, or take a wrong turn, call for help:

Superior National Forest

Duane Lula, Forest Planner 218-626-4383 Kris Reichenbach, Public Information 218-626-4393

Chippewa National Forest

Ann Long-Voelkner, Forest Planner 218-355-8600 Kay Getting, Public Affairs 218-335-8673

Remember to check the Forest Plan Revision web page for additional information.

Forest Plan Revision Web Page:

fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa/plan/planning.htm

A "new" product is available on the Chippewa and Superior revision web page... the **Forest Plan Revision MAPSERVER.** Using the **MAPSERVER** application, on-line users can display maps, zoom in and out, and turn available features on and off to tailor the map view as needed. You can link off the Forest Plan Revision Web Page or go direction to:

www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa/plan/planning.htm and select MAPSERVER.

Visit our "Information Centers"

A series of public houses will be held at the Chippewa and Superior National Forest offices to provide an orientation to the Draft EIS and the Proposed Forest Plans. Each Open House will include a brief overview of the documents and guidance for review and comment on the documents. Watch for coming announcements.

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Comment Form Draft EIS & Proposed Forest Plans



Please use this form to offer your views on the Forest Plan Revision process, including the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Proposed Forest Plans for the Chippewa and Superior National Forests (NF). Be aware that all comments are part of the planning record, which is public information. Comments from the public help the decision maker to choose an alternative for implementation. All comments will be summarized in the Final EIS.

Send comments to:

Forest Plan Revision Chippewa National Forest 200 Ash Avenue NW Cass Lake, MN 56633-8929 OR tstruecker@fs.fed.us

You can also comment on the web:

www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa

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	Alternative A (No Action)		Alternative C Alternative D		Alternative E (Preferred)		Alternative F Alternative G	
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